



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Depression

Think about your fellow co-worker, or family member.

Chances are at one time or another either you or they have suffered from a bout of depression.

Depression can untimely kill you. It is an illness that attacks between 17 and 20 million Americans each year and affects twice as many women as men.

The good news is that depression is a treatable disease and nothing to be ashamed of. By aggressively addressing the symptoms, sufferers can live a healthy, productive life.

There are two types of depression: clinical depression and what is normally called sadness or "the blues."

The major difference between the two is that clinical depression is an illness, while sadness is basically a normal reaction to unsettling events, that occurred in a person's life, such as marital problems or a bad work evaluation.

Depression can be caused by biological or chemical reasons, or it can be a reaction to an extended period of intense loss such as being fired, divorce or the death of a loved one or other instances of intense emotional anguish.

When someone is clinically depressed they are down emotionally for an extended period of time.

When someone has "the blues" their reaction might be 'I didn't like what happened,' and for that person life goes on.

For the clinically depressed, life becomes a chore and often lacks joy or purpose. Medical causes of depression include having a chemical imbalance in the brain's serotonin levels, hypoglycemia or it can even be a secondary diagnosis to a medical condition such as Parkinson's Disease or a cardiac condition.

Heart attack survivors who have a major episode of depression have a three times greater risk of dying.

Symptoms of depression are manifested by feeling of sadness, emptiness, hopelessness and worthlessness.

People who are depressed have a hard time making decisions and complain of a lack of energy, have trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or getting up. Other symptoms include changes in appetite, headaches, stomach aches or backaches. Some victims of depression are restless and irritable and may want to be alone most of the time.

They may also start abusing drugs and alcohol and cut back on hobbies or activities that are usually pleasurable.

When left untreated, depression can untimely wreck havoc on a person's total well-being.

The best way to fight depression is by being aware of the problem and by self-education. Depression is an illness that can be treated effectively. No one should be ashamed to seek help.

When a person feels a depressed mood coming on, they should force themselves to do pleasurable activities, ensure they get enough rest, exercise properly and eat a proper diet.

I know it sounds like something your mother would say, but we all know Mom was always right. Walking three or four times a week also does wonders. Exercise releases dopamine, which is a natural mood enhancer.

There are various ways a proper diet can enhance mental health. A poor diet can contribute to pernicious amnesia, dementia, mood changes and mood disorders.

A diet lacking in niacin can cause delirium, apathy and even hyperirritability. One lacking in Vitamin C can also result in depression and anxiety.

Eating a good source of protein such as fish, lean meats, chicken, peanut butter, tofu or beans at least twice a day increases alertness and mental energy. Around 20 percent of calories should be protein.

Carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, rice, crackers, cereal or potatoes should be eaten at most meals to maximize serotonin production and prevent depression, but should be limited to 55 percent of a person's diet.

A proper diet should be rounded off with five or six servings of fruits and vegetables each day to provide antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, fibers and palatability.

The battle with depression can be won by infusing life with hopeful activities and taking care of yourself.

You have to invest in yourself. These are several things you can do to take care of yourself and seeking counseling is always an option.